



July 29, 2009

The Honorable Carl Levin  
Senator  
Russell Senate Office Building SR-269  
Washington, DC 20510-2202

Dear Senator Levin:

Please accept my sincere thanks for your vote in favor of the Amendment (S.AMDT.1610) offered by Senator Sam Brownback to the Matthew Shepard Hate Crimes Prevention Act ("hate crimes") during the recent Senate debate. While opinions vary on whether hate crimes legislation is either prudent or necessary, there is certainly no question that fundamental liberties need to be protected. The Brownback Amendment offers unique protection that would minimize the chance that this bill, if it is ultimately signed into law, could be used to abusively prosecute citizens for their ideas or expression. The Amendment uses a framework similar to the Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA) which was passed overwhelmingly by Congress previously and which has been effectively applied by the courts.

Now that this legislation is attached to the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2010 (S. 1390), and the Senate and House will be in conference soon regarding both, we would appreciate your continued support for the Brownback Amendment (S.AMDT.1610) as it continues through this process.

Sincerely,

Frank Wright, Ph.D.  
President & CEO

National

Religious

Broadcasters

9510 Technology Drive

Manassas, VA 20110

Phone: 703-330-7000

Fax: 703-330-7100

Capitol Hill Office:

227 Mass. Ave., NE

Suite 102

Washington, DC 20002

Phone: 202-543-0073

Fax: 202-543-2649

[www.nrb.org](http://www.nrb.org)

[info@nrb.org](mailto:info@nrb.org)

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